A healthy dose of comments:

A qualitative examination of online health-news reader comments

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Why this study is important

While Internet discourse is a growing phenomenon, scholars have given little attention to how readers respond to health news published on the Web. Therefore, this qualitative study textually analyzes reader comments in response to online health news.
Upon collecting and evaluating the data, categories were developed to summarize the average commenters and demonstrate who these people tend to be and what they normally contribute to the online discussion.
“Microwaves cook. Do you know how? By causing the water molecules to rotate faster using non-ionizing radiation that has a wavelength between that of radio and infrared. They then bump into other molecules and share this energy of motion - this is the heating. Your microwave oven has a power of about 1000W, your cell phone about 1 watt…. when you walk to your car in the sunshine, even if just for a few minutes, you're doing more cell damage than you can possibly get from a cell phone, and that's because sunlight includes photons with enough energy to cause cell damage.”
"That's where I [SIC] blame Republicans. As mentioned above if they actually stood where they stood in 1993-94 then we could have had Dems and Republicans standing together against the lobbies and had real cost control. But again that doesn't absolve Dems from the shady deals that they made on behalf of ‘reform’."
“My eldest daughter passed away 2 years ago due to complications from an automobile accident involving a drunk driver. It is the most painful situation I have ever faced. Especially considering she had given her keys to drive her to the fella she was out drinking with. Yep she had some culpability in her own death. There are so many other families out there that have been decimated because of the war on drugs and alcohol and the way it is prosecuted. I also lost my grandmother many years ago to a drunk driver she was riding with who decided to speed.”
“If [marijuana] were legalized, you could have a wide array of epic ice-creams, alcohols, baked goods and better cartoons.”
Conclusion

- LOTS of comments antagonizing the government
- We are going through hard economic times; people are worried about their health and the health of their loved ones.
- Relating problems to personal experience is cathartic and helps other know they’re not alone.
- Many people related their personal experiences to an overall societal issue, making their episodic experiences part of one thematic problem.